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AUTHOR Banks, James A.
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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this exploratory study was to determine the extent to which black families living in predominantly white suburban communities were bicultural in their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Subjects included 111 individuals from 64 black families living in 9 white suburban communities of a large metropolitan region in the Pacific Northwest. Families completed questionnaires and scales were developed to measure assimilation, pluralism, and marginality. Items in one group of variables--school attitudes, neighborhood attitudes, structural assimilation, and school participation--were conceptualized as assimilationist attitudes and behaviors. Items in another group--pluralist beliefs, uneasiness with whites, anxiety, pluralist behavior total, and the presence of other black and white individuals in an individual's life--were conceptualized as indicators of pluralist attitudes and behaviors. While this study indicated that most of the subjects valued their interactions with both blacks and whites and tried to live bicultural lives, results also show that the more positive subjects felt about blacks and the more active they were in the black community, the more negative they felt toward predominantly white institutions. Conversely, the more positive subjects felt toward predominantly white communities and the more active they were in them, the less pluralist they were in both attitudes and beliefs. (LH)

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An Exploratory Study of Assimilation, Pluralism, and Marginality: Black Families in Predominantly White Suburbs*

James A. Banks
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
American Educational Research Association
(New Orleans, LA, April 23-27, 1984.)

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SO 015 747

Mailing Address:
115 Miller Hall DQ-12
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195

An Exploratory Study of Assimilation, Pluralism, and Marginality:
Black Families in Predominantly White Suburbs

The number of middle-class Blacks has increased significantly since the civil rights movement of the 1960s. When Blacks become middle class, they frequently move from the central area of the city to the suburbs. Between 1960 and 1977, the number of Black suburban residents increased 71.8 per cent. In 1977, 18.8 per cent of Blacks were suburban residents.[14] In 1981, one out of every five Blacks lived in the suburbs.[5] Blacks now constitute over 6 per cent of the total population in the nation's suburbs.[6] Black suburban residents are a highly diversified and not a homogeneous population. Many Black suburban residents live in predominantly Black working-class spillover communities. Others live in predominantly Black middle-class suburbs. However, a significant number of Black suburban residents live in predominantly White middle-class suburban communities. They are a small but increasingly significant minority within their communities.

Blacks who live in the nation's predominantly White suburban communities have been largely neglected by social science theorists and researchers. Most of the existing studies of Blacks focus on lower-status Blacks who are residents of central cities.[13] This is the case, in part, because lower-class Blacks make up the largest subgroup of Blacks. Yet, the Black community is becoming more and more diversified in terms of values, behaviors, and attitudes because of increasing social class variation within the group.[20,21] One of the most important characteristics of Blacks today is their intra-group variation. Unless more research is done that contributes to a description of the intra-group variation within the Black population, we run the risk of perpetuating the inaccurate notion that Blacks are a monolithic, lower-class eth-

nic group.

Since the 1960s, a number of important studies have been done on Black suburban residents. However, most have described migration and dispersal patterns but not the social and psychological world of the Black suburbanite. None of the studies reviewed were exclusively concerned with the lives of Black families who were residents of predominantly White suburbs. Among the studies that focus on migration patterns and the qualities and characteristics of the suburbs in which Blacks live are those by Blumberg and Lalli,[4] Farley,[9] Downs,[8] Rabinovitz,[18] Rose,[19] Frey,[10] Clark,[6] Connolly,[7] Marshall and Stahura,[15] and Lake.[14] Pettigrew[17] is one of the few researchers who has examined the psychological factors related to Black suburbanization. He studied the attitudes of Whites, income levels, and the willingness of Blacks to move to the suburbs. In an earlier study, Northwood and Barth[16] studied the attitudes of Black and White families who lived in selected predominantly White neighborhoods of a large city in the Northwest.

The major purpose of this study was to describe the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of a sample of Black families who lived in selected predominantly White suburban communities of a large metropolitan region in the Northwest. Few researchers have described the social psychology, social organization, and interpersonal relationships of the Black suburban family. A major goal of the present study was to help close this gap in the literature and to help answer this question: "What is life like for the Black family that lives in a predominantly White suburban community?" Another important goal was to determine how concepts and theories related to assimilation, pluralism, biculturalism, and marginality could help explain the attitudes and behavior of Black subur-

banites. A corollary goal was to use the findings of this study to contribute to a better understanding of these concepts and theories.

Current theory suggests that ethnic minorities that function within predominantly White institutions, organizations, and communities run the risk of becoming "marginal persons" who remain alienated from both the majority and minority community and who are structurally excluded from mainstream society and institutions. Writes Gordon[11] (p. 56), "The marginal man is the person who stands on the borders or margins of two cultural worlds but is fully a member of neither." Existing social science theory, however, should be constantly tested with data in the real world and revised to make it more consistent with current social realities.

It might be possible for Black families in predominantly White organizations and communities, such as White suburbia, to maintain identities with both the Black central city community and with their White suburban communities. It may also be possible for them to function adequately in both communities without feeling alienated from either. Blacks living in predominantly White suburban communities may also be able to develop and maintain positive racial attitudes toward both Blacks in the central city and Whites in their local suburban communities. The "marginal man" hypothesis suggests that it is not possible for ethnic minorities to develop and maintain bicultural identities, behavior, and racial attitudes. An important goal of this exploratory study was to determine the extent to which Black families living in predominantly White suburban communities were bicultural in their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior.

Method

Subjects

A method was developed to identify Black families with school-age children who lived in selected predominantly White suburban communities of a metropolitan region of the Pacific Northwest. This method consisted primarily of asking members of Black churches, social and civic organizations, and community groups to identify families in which both parents identified themselves as Black, the family had school-age children, and lived in a predominantly White suburban community of the SMSA being studied. In each of the communities selected, Black residents constituted only a very small percentage of the population, ranging from .38 to 2.5 per cent.

Sixty-four qualified families, including their school-age chidren, participated in the study. Fifty (78 per cent) of the 64 families were headed by two parents; 14 (22 per cent) were single-parent families. All but one of the single-parent families were headed by a female. The parents that participated in this study had high incomes and high levels of educational attainment. Fifty-one per cent of the families had incomes of $40,000 or above. Fifty-five per cent of the parents had either some graduate or professional school training or had finished graduate or professional school.

Once a family decided to participate in the study, its participation rate was high. Only three parents (fathers) in the 64 families failed to participate in the study because of scheduling problems. A total of 111 parents (48 fathers and 63 mothers) and 121 children participated in the larger study. The present study reports the major findings related to the parents. Data related to the children and to the interrelationships of the parent and

children is reported elsewhere.[2]

There are inherent difficulties in identifying Black families with school-age children who live in predominantly White suburban communities in which they are a very small minority. This study required all members of the family (parents and school-age chidren) to participate during what is normally their leisure time, a Saturday afternoon. These constraints eliminated the possibility of both a larger sample and a random selection of the subjects. However, all of the identified families that were willing and qualified were included in the sample. The nature and size of the sample were adequate to satisfy the major goals of this exploratory study of a highly neglected population.

Procedures

The families that participated in this study had the option to complete the questionnaires at a central testing site on a university campus or to request that a member of the research staff administer the questionnaires in their homes. Twenty-nine families completed the questionnaires at each site. In six families, part of the family members completed the questionnaires at home and part at the central testing site. At the central testing site, questionnaires were administered individually to parents in standardized group situations by trained staff members. At the home sites, the same staff members administered the questionnaires to the parents individually.

Instrumentation

Assimilation, Pluralism, and Biculturalism

Pluralism, as used in this study, is the extent to which Blacks are committed to the perpetuation of their ethnic culture and to the survival of ethnic institutions, including the Black church and Black civic organizations such as the Links and Jack and Jill. Ethnic pluralism also promotes an ideology that supports the survival of the ethnic group as a separate cultural entity and a positive ethnic group identity. Assimilation, like pluralism, describes both a process and an ideology. Assimilation describes the process by which ethnic groups such as Blacks acquire attitudes, behaviors, symbols, and other cultural components of the mainstream society. As an ideology, assimilation suggests that ethnic groups should acquire the values and behaviors of the mainstream society, while pluralism maintains that important aspects of ethnic cultures should be maintained and perpetuated. Biculturalism, which is also a social science concept and an ideology, maintains that it is possible and desirable for ethnic groups to function effectively within both their ethnic community and in the mainstream society.

A number of scales were developed to measure assimilation and pluralism variables because of their central importance. The items on each scale used in the study, except Gradualism, were scored in such a way that higher scores indicated a greater degree of the variable being measured. Higher scores on the Gradualism scale indicated more militant and less gradualist beliefs. An example of a question from each of the instruments is found in Table 1. The internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha), means, and standard

deviations obtained for each of the scales is reported in Table 2.

Pluralist Beliefs. This scale consists of 14 items which were designed to measure the extent to which the subjects held pluralistic beliefs about the way in which Blacks and Whites should relate.

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Pluralist Behavior. Three subscales were developed to measure the extent to which the subjects participated in predominantly Black interpersonal relationships, Black social organizations, civil rights organizations, and other Black institutions and activities. Data from this measure were treated both as one measure of pluralist behavior (Pluralist Behavior Total) and as three separate subscales (Pluralist Behavior 1, 2, and 3). Since the items within these subscales were highly interrelated yet different, it was assumed that by treating the subscales first as a single unit and then separately, more relationships among variables might be revealed.

Black and White Individuals in Life. This 24-item scale was designed to measure the degree of behavioral pluralism of the subjects by asking them to indicate the race of individuals from whom they received services, such as their bankers, baby sitters, hired yard help, and family physicians. The more Black individuals that were indicated, the higher was the score received by the respondent.

Structural Assimilation. Gordon makes an important distinction between cultural and structural assimilation.[11] Cultural assimilation takes place when ethnic groups such as Blacks and Mexican Americans acquire the values, life-styles, and other components of the mainstream culture. Structural assi-

milation takes place when ethnic minorities are able to freely participate in the cliques, clubs, and institutions of the mainstream White society at the primary group level. The six items that constitute the Structural Assimilation scale were designed to determine the extent to which the parents were structurally assimilated into their predominantly White suburban communities.

Uneasiness with Whites. This 8-item scale was designed to measure the extent to which the subjects felt uneasy around Whites. Positive interracial relationships and structural assimilation can best take place when both Blacks and Whites feel comfortable in their interpersonal relationships with each other.

Anxiety. The 16-item Anxiety scale was designed to measure the extent to which the parent subjects were anxious and concerned about the socialization of their children within a predominantly White sociocultural environment. A reasonable hypothesis is that the greater the degree of anxiety that Black parents have about their children in White suburbia, the lesser their degree of attitudinal and behavioral assimilation.

School Participation and School Attitudes. The 8-item school participation scale measured the extent to which parents were involved in school-related activities, including the Parent Teachers Association and parent conferences. The 9-item school attitudes scale measured the degree to which the parents felt positive toward the school, both as an academic institution of high quality and as a sociocultural environment that enhances the social and emotional growth of their children.

Neighborhood Attitudes. This 9-item scale was developed to determine the extent to which the parents felt positive toward their neighborhood as an

environment both for themselves and for their children.

Religious Participation. The six items in this scale were designed to determine the extent to which the respondents were actively involved in religious activities. It was hypothesized that high religious activity would be related to high pluralism because it was assumed that most church participants would be active in predominantly Black churches in the central city rather than in predominantly White churches in the suburbs. It was also hypothesized that high religious activity by the parents would be positively related to child pluralist behavior and attitudes.

Black Superiority and Gradualism. Black Superiority and Gradualism are subscales taken from the Multifactor Racial Attitude Inventory (MRAI) developed by Ard and Cook.[1] It was hypothesized that subjects who had more positive attitudes toward Blacks would be more pluralistic and less assimilationist in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The Black Superiority subscale consists of ten statements which state either that Blacks have some special characteristics that Whites do not have or that they do not have these characteristics (see Table 1). The Gradualism subscale consists of ten statements about how rapidly the process of racial integration should take place. The responses are scored in such a way that higher scores are obtained when the subject disagrees with statements that racial integration should proceed slowly and agrees with those that indicate that racial integration should proceed more rapidly.

Results

Variation by Suburb

The 64 families that participated in this study lived in nine different suburban communities of a large metropolitan region in the Northwest. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine if there was a significant variation by suburb on any of the major attitude and behavior variables. This analysis revealed that variation by suburb was significant ($p < .05$) on five of the measures: (1) Pluralist Behavior 2; (2) Black and White Individuals in Life; (3) School Participation; (4) Anxiety; and (5) Black Superiority. The Newman-Keuls test was used to determine the source of the significant difference for each of the variables. For each variable, the mean was compared with the others to determine the source of the significant difference.

In the Newman-Keuls analysis for Pluralistic Behavior 2, it was revealed that both Suburb 1 ($\overline{X} = 33$) and Suburb 2 ($\overline{X} = 32.9$) had means significantly greater ($p = .05$) than Suburb 8 ($\overline{X} = 17$). This finding might be explained by the relative distance of these suburbs from the central city (where most Blacks live) and to the percentage of Blacks in the various suburbs. Both Suburb 1 and Suburb 2 had higher percentages of Blacks than Suburb 8 (1.3 per cent and 2.5 per cent, compared to .38 per cent). Suburbs 1 and 2 are also located closer to the central city than Suburb 8. While the one-way analysis of variance indicated significant differences on four other variables named above, the Newman-Keuls test did not pinpoint differences in means, probably because of the small number of subjects in five of the nine suburbs.

Since all of the variables on which the subjects varied by suburb (except

School Participation) were related to pluralism, we can hypothesize that the parents who lived in suburbs with higher concentrations of Blacks and with closer proximity to the central city were more pluralistic in both their beliefs and their behaviors. The findings in this study discussed later indicate that the beliefs and behavior of the subjects tended to be congruent. Parents with pluralist beliefs tended to have pluralist behaviors.

A one-tailed t-test was performed to determine whether the parents who completed the questionnaires at the central testing site and at home differed significantly on any of the attitude and behavior variables. This test revealed that the parents who completed the questionnaires at the central testing site scored significantly higher on the Pluralist Behavior 1 scale ($p = .02$), the Black Superiority scale ($p = .04$), and on the School Participation scale ($p = .01$).

Since the subjects who completed the questionnaires at the two different sites differed significantly on only three variables, we can conclude that the two populations were not in many ways different. However, since the subjects who completed the questionnaires at the central testing site scored higher on both the Pluralist Behavior 1 Scale ($\overline{X}$ =24.6 as compared to $\overline{X}$ = 21.3) and the Black Superiority scale ($\overline{X}$ = 17.0 as compared to 15.8), a reasonable hypothesis is that they were slightly more pluralist in both behavior and beliefs than the subjects who completed the questionnaires at home. This hypothesis is supported by findings from the children's data in the larger study. The children aged 8 to 18 who completed the questionnaires at home were more positive toward Whites and less pro-Black than the children who completed the questionnaires at the central testing site.[2] The children aged 4 to 7 tested

at home perceived their fathers and mothers as Black less often than the children who were tested at the central testing site.[3]

We have no reasonable hypothesis to explain why the parents who completed the questionnaires at the central testing site were more active school participants, except that they are probably generally more cooperative and participatory. Unlike the other participants, they agreed to come to a central testing site to complete the questionnaires rather than require us to interview them at home.

Variation by Sex

A one-tailed t-test was performed to determine whether male and female parents varied significantly on any of the attitude and behavior measures. While it was hypothesized that mothers would be more active school participants than fathers, this was not the case. This finding is probably explained by the fact, as pointed out by Willie,[20] that Black middle-class families tend to be egalitarian. Men and women usually share responsibilities, and traditional male-female distinctions are blurred. Consequently, men are likely to be as active in school as women. Women were slightly more active in religion than men, although this finding did not attain statistical significance ($p = .078$). Mothers ($\overline{X} = 53.4$) had slightly more pluralistic beliefs than fathers ($\overline{X} = .50$; $p. = .04$). This surprising and unexpected finding requires further study in different settings and with different populations of Blacks.

Education, Age, and Income

A Pearson correlation was performed to determine whether any of the attitude and behavior variables were significantly related to education, age, and income. Education, when defined as the highest level of school completed, was not significantly related to any of the attitude and behavior variables except Pluralist Behavior 1 ($r = .19$; $p = .025$). Education and Structural Assimilation approached but did not attain significance ($r = .14$; $p = .08$). When defined as the highest degree attained, education approached significance when correlated with Pluralist Behavior 3 ($r = .13$; $p = .09$), Pluralist Behavior Total ($r = .16$; $p = .06$), Gradualism ($r = .15$; $p = .09$), and School Participation ($r = .15$, $p = .07$). It reached significance when correlated with Black and White Individuals in Life ($r = .17$; $p = .04$) and with Pluralist Behavior 1 ($r = .17$; $p = .04$).

Age correlated significantly and positively with School Attitudes ($r = .22$, $p = .01$) and Neighborhood Attitudes ($r = .22$, $p = .01$). Age correlated significantly and negatively with Pluralist Beliefs ($r = -.30$, $p = .001$), Black and White Individuals in Life ($r = -.25$, $p = .004$), and Uneasiness with Whites ($r = -.23$, $p = .01$). Age was related negatively and approached significance when correlated with Pluralist Behavior 2 ($r = -.16$, $p = .057$), Pluralist Behavior Total ($r = -.16$, $p = .06$), and Anxiety ($r = -.14$, $p = .07$).

Income correlated significantly and positively with Pluralist Beliefs ($r = .20$; $p = .02$), Pluralist Behavior 3 ($r = .17$; $p = .04$), Pluralist Behavior Total ($r = .19$, $p = .03$), and Black and White Individuals in Life ($r = .31$, $p = .001$). Income correlated significantly and negatively with

Religious Participation ($r = -.25$; $p = .005$).

It was hypothesized that education, age, and income would be positively correlated with variables related to assimilation and negatively related to pluralism variables. This hypothesis grew out of the assumption that individuals with higher educations and incomes would be older and more conservative in their beliefs, more structurally integrated into White society, and consequently more assimilationist than pluralist oriented. The data supported this hypothesis only as it relates to age. Age was positively related to assimilation measures, such as School and Neighborhood attitudes, and negatively related to pluralism variables such as Pluralist Beliefs, Blacks and White Individuals in Life, and Uneasiness with Whites.

Education was not related to most of the attitude and behavior variables, probably because of the small degree of educational variation among the subjects. In the few instances where education was significantly related to pluralism variables, it correlated with them positively and not negatively as was hypothesized. Income was positively related to four pluralism variables and negatively related to religious participation.

The findings in this study suggest that while age tends to be related to assimilationist behavior and beliefs, education and income are frequently not related to assimilation and pluralism as conceptualized in this study. When education and income are related to pluralism they correlate with it positively, and not negatively, as was hypothesized. The findings related to education, income, assimilation, and pluralism in this study might be unique to the kind of population studied. These variables need to be studied further among Blacks who live in diverse regions and communities.

The Intercorrelation of the Attitude and Behavior Variables

The Neighborhood and School

As this study is conceptualized, School Participation, Neighborhood Attitudes, and Structural Assimilation are variables related to attitudinal and behavioral assimilation. Consequently, several interrelated hypotheses were formulated. First, that parents who attained high scores on these measures would tend to attain lower scores on measures of attitudinal and behavioral pluralism; second, that the measures of attitudinal and behavioral assimilation would be significantly correlated; third, that parents who were highly attitudinally assimilated would tend to have positive attitudes toward their schools and neighborhoods; fourth, that parents who were highly assimilated would attain higher scores on the Structural Assimilation measure and lower scores on measures of behavioral pluralism, such as Pluralist Behavior Total and Black and White Individuals in Life. It was also hypothesized that more assimilated parents would be more active school participants.

To what extent were the hypotheses supported by the data? Pearson correlations were performed to determine how each of the behavior and attitude variables were intercorrelated (see Table 3). As hypothesized, School Participation and Structural Assimilation correlated positively and significantly ($r = .25$; $p = .006$). School Participation, however, was not significantly related to any of the other attitude and behavior variables. Consequently, we cannot conclude that School Participation was consistently related to assimilationist behavior in this study. School Attitudes, or how the parents felt about their schools, was much more consistently related to the other measures

of assimilation and pluralism. As expected, School Attitudes correlated significantly and positively with Neighborhood Attitudes ($r = .63$; $p = .001$) and approached significance with Structural Assimilation ($r = .15$; $p = .06$). However, it was not significantly related to School Participation, as had been hypothesized.

Insert Table 3 about here

It was hypothesizd that School participation, School Attitudes, Neighborhood Attitudes, and Structural Assimilation (the four measures of assimilationist beliefs and behaviors) would be negatively related to the measures of pluralist beliefs and behaviors. School Participation was not significantly related to any of the measures of pluralism. As hypothesized, School Attitudes correlated signficantly and negatively with all but two of the pluralism measures: Pluralist Behavior 3 and Black Superiority. Its correlation with both Pluralist Behavior 3 ($r = -.15$; $p = .06$) and Black Superiority ($r = -.16$; $p = .07$) approached significance. School Attitudes correlated most strongly (and negatively) with Uneasiness with Whites ($r = -.42$; $p = .001$), Pluralist Beliefs ($r = -.53$; $p = .001$), Anxiety ($r = -.53$, $p = .001$), and Pluralist Behavior Total ($r = -.32$; $p = .001$).

As hypothesized, Neighborhood Attitudes and most of the measures of pluralism were negatively related. Neighborhood Attitudes correlated most strongly and negatively with Pluralist Beliefs ($r = -.63$; $p = .001$), Uneasiness with Whites ($r = -.48$; $p = .001$), Anxiety ($r = -.37$; $p = .001$), Black and White Individuals in Life ($r = -.34$; $p = .001$), and Pluralist

Behavior Total ($r = -.25$; $p = .007$). These findings suggest that parents who held more pluralist beliefs and who were more pluralist in their behaviors were more likely than more assimilationist-oriented parents to have negative attitudes toward both the school and neighborhood.

Pluralist Beliefs and Behaviors

It was hypothesized that the six direct measures of pluralism (i.e., Pluralist Beliefs, Pluralist Behavior 1, Pluralist Behavior 2, Pluralist Behavior 3, Pluralist Behavior Total, and Black and White Individuals in Life) and the four indirect measures of pluralism (i.e., Uneasiness with Whites; Anxiety; Black Superiority, and Gradualism) would be highly intercorrelated. While each of these measures is conceptually distinct, each theoretically assesses the extent to which individuals express pluralism in both beliefs and actions. The indirect measures of pluralism, such as Uneasiness with Whites and Anxiety, are each assumed to be highly related to pluralist beliefs and actions. It was hypothesized that Black parents who are highly pluralist in their beliefs and actions will tend to feel more uneasy with Whites, to be more anxious about their children in a predominantly White sociocultural environment, will have a greater tendency to accept Black superiority beliefs, and will be less likely to accept gradualism than will Black parents who are more assimilationist in beliefs and behaviors.

These hypotheses were partially supported by the data. As expected, Pluralist Beliefs correlated positively and significantly with Uneasiness with Whites ($r = .45$, $p = .001$), Pluralist Behavior 1 ($r = .23$, $p = .008$), Pluralist Behavior 2 ($r = .25$; $p = .006$), Pluralist Behavior Total ($r = .32$;

p = .008), Black and White Individuals in Life (r = .30; p = .001), Anxiety (r = .35; p = .001), and Black Superiority (r = .16; p = .005). Pluralist beliefs, contrary to what had been hypothesized, did not correlate significantly with Pluralist Behavior 3 and Gradualism. As expected, Pluralist Beliefs correlated significantly and negatively with School Attitudes (r = -.53; p = .001) and Neighborhood Attitudes (r = -.63; p = .001). Pluralist Beliefs and Structural Assimilation were negatively related as expected but this relationship was not statistically significant (r = -.13; p = .09).

As hypothesized, Pluralist Behavior 1 correlated positively and significantly with Uneasiness with Whites (r = .22; p = .01), Pluralist Beliefs (r = .23; p = .008), Black and White Individuals in Life (r = .18; p = .03) and Anxiety (r = .21; p = .01). It approached significance when correlated with Black Superiority (r = .16; p = .07). Pluralist Behavior 1, as expected and hypothesized, correlated negatively and significantly with School Attitudes (r = -.20; p = .02). However, Pluralist Behavior 1 was expected to correlate positively and significantly with these variables but it did not: Pluralist Behavior 2, Pluralist Behavior 3, and Gradualism. Pluralist Behavior 1 correlated negatively with Neighborhood Attitudes as was expected, but this relationship was not statistically significant (r = -.13; p = .10).

As hypothesized, Pluralist Behavior 2 correlated positively and significantly with Uneasiness with Whites (r = .27; p = .004), Pluralist Beliefs (r = .25; p = .006), Pluralist Behavior 3 (r = .23; p = .01), and Black and White Individuals in Life (r = .50; p = .001). It did not correlate significantly with Pluralist Behavior 1, Anxiety, Gradualism, and Black

Superiority. However, its correlation with Black Superiority approached significance ($r = .17$; $p = .06$). As expected, Pluralist Behavior 2 correlated negatively and significantly with School Attitudes ($r = -.24$; $p = .008$) and Neighborhood Attitudes ($r = -.20$; $p = .02$). Its correlation with Structural Assimilation approached but did not attain significance ($r = -.15$; $p = .07$).

Three of the four questions that comprise the Pluralist Behavior 3 scale ask the subjects about the number of Black magazines, newspapers, and books in their homes. The fourth question asks the subject how often soul food dishes are served in the home. The responses to this subscale were not strongly related to the responses to the other measures of pluralism, perhaps because of the small number of items in this scale and the limited variability in the responses (SD = 4.6). Pluralist Behavior 3 correlated significantly and positively with only two of the other measures of pluralism: Pluralist Behavior 2 ($r = .23$; $p = .01$) and Black and White Individuals in Life ($r = .25$; $p = .004$). As hypothesized, Pluralist Behavior 3 correlated negatively and approached significance with School Attitudes ($r = -.15$; $p = .06$) and Neighborhood Attitudes ($r = -.15$; $p = .06$). It was not significantly related to Structural Assimilation.

Pluralist Behaviors 1, 2, and 3 were not as interrelated as was hypothesized. Pluralist Behavior 1 did not correlate significantly with either Pluralist Behavior 2 or 3. Pluralist Behavior 3 correlated significantly with Pluralist 2 but not with Pluralist Behavior 1. When combined and treated as one scale, Pluralist Behavior Total, the Pluralist Behavior measure correlated significantly with all of the pluralism measures (see Table 3), except Anxiety, Black Superiority, and Gradualism. As hypothesized, Pluralist

Behavior Total correlated negatively and significantly with School Attitudes ($r = -.32$; $p = .001$) and Neighborhood Attitudes ($r = -.25$; $p = .007$).

Religious Participation

It was hypothesized that religious participation would be strongly related to both pluralist beliefs and pluralist behaviors. The Black church is still one of the strongest and most active carriers of Black culture.[12] The Black churches located in the central area of a metropolitan region are where Black children who live in disparate areas often meet to interact socially, become acquainted with dating partners and future spouses, and to interact generally with the Black community. It is usually in the Black church where diverse groups and social classes meet and become acquainted. It was hypothesized, for these reasons, that Religious Participation would be related strongly to both pluralist beliefs and behaviors.

One of the most surprising findings is that Religious Participation, as conceptualized and measured in this study, was unrelated to most of the other attitude and behavior variables. The only attitude and behavior variable with which it was significantly correlated was Pluralist Behavior 2 ($r = .21$; $p = .02$). The six items that comprise the Religious Participation scale ask the subjects questions related to whether they are church members, how often they attend Sunday worship service, how often their children attend church or religious instruction, and how active the respondent is in church organizations. The fact that religious participation was not significantly related to most of the measures of pluralism in this study may be due to the nature of the questions asked, to the uniqueness of this sample, or to the fact that

religious participation is not significantly related to pluralist beliefs and behaviors among Blacks who live in predominantly White surburban communities. More research is needed among Blacks in different regions and settings before we can better explain the relationship between pluraiist and assimilationist beliefs and behavior, and religious participation.

Conclusions and Discussion

An attempt was made in this study to conceptualize two major variables--assimilation and pluralism--and to determine the ways in which these concepts could help to describe and explain the socio-psychological world of a sample of Black parents who lived in predominantly White suburban communities. An effort was also made to determine how these major concepts could help describe the extent to which these parents were "marginal persons." One group of variables-School Attitudes, Neighborhood Attitudes, Structural Assimilation, and School Participation--were conceptualized as indicators of assimilationist attitudes and behaviors. Another group of variables, such as Pluralist Beliefs, Uneasiness with Whites, Anxiety, Pluralist Behavior Total, and Black and White Individuals in Life, were conceptualized as indicators of pluralist attitudes and behaviors. In general, the ways in which the various assimilationist and pluralist variables were intercorrelated indicate that they are valid and reliable measures of assimilation and pluralism. Most of the variables that we conceptualized as indicators of assimilation correlated negatively and significantly with the variables that were conceptualized as measures of pluralism. Most of the assimilation variables also correlated

with each other in the expected direction as did most of the pluralist variables.

However, some of the variables were not related to others in the ways that had been hypothesized. School Participation was not related to most of the other variables in the study--including the assimilation and pluralist measures. Whether the parents in this study were active or inactive in their neighborhood schools was unrelated to their degree of attitudinal and behavioral assimilation. Gradualism was also unrelated to most of the other variables. The beliefs of the parents in this study about the speed at which racial integration should take place was not an important predictor of assimilationist or pluralist attitudes and behaviors. The three subascales that measured Pluralist Behavior were not as highly intercorrelated as was hypothesized. However, when combined to constitute Pluralist Behavior Total, they were a valid and reliable measure of pluralist behavior. Pluralist Behavior Total correlated significantly with most of the other variables in the expected direction.

An important goal of this study was to determine the extent to which the Black parents in this sample were structuraly integrated into their predominantly White communities, the extent to which they were active participants in the predominantly Black community in the central area of the city, and whether they might be considered "marginal persons," i.e., not well integrated into either their predominantly White suburban communities or the Black community in the central city.

The findings of this study do not provide unequivocal answers to these questions. However, a number of the findings do shed light on them and help

us to better understand the socio-psychological world of Black families that live in predominantly White suburban communities. The variability in the responses to most of the measures indicate that the Black suburbanites in this sample were not a monolithic group. The variability in the responses to the Pluralist Beliefs (SD = 9.1), Pluralist Behavior Total (SD = 12.9), and Anxiety (23.7) scales were especially noteworthy.

A number of the findings in this study indicate that many of the parents were bicultural in their beliefs, attitudes, and behavior. Many of the parents had positive attitudes toward both Blacks and Whites, voluntarily interacted with both Blacks and Whites frequently, and valued their interactions with both racial groups. While most of the parents valued their interactions with Whites and had positive attitudes toward Whites as a group, they maintained contact with the Black community, felt that their children needed to interact with Blacks frequently in order to have good mental health, considered most of their close friends to be Black, and attended a Black or racially integrated church.

While this study indicates that most of the parents in this sample valued their interactions with both Blacks and Whites and tried to live bicultural lives, most of the intercorrelations of the assimilationist and pluralist variables indicate the problems and difficulties of trying to participate in two cultural settings and to live a bicultural life. Most of the assimilationist and pluralist variables were significantly and negatively related. In other words, the more pluralist beliefs and behaviors the parents had, the more negative they felt toward their schools and neighborhoods, and the less structurally included they were into their predominantly White communities.

These findings seem to indicate that there are apparently characteristics within predominantly Black and White worlds that cause negative feelings and perceptions of each other. The more positive the subjects in this study felt about Blacks and the more active they were in the Black community the more negative they felt toward the predominantly White institutions in which they participated on a daily basis. The converse was also true. The more positive the parents in this study felt toward their predominantly White communities and the more active they were in them, the less pluralist they were in both attitudes and beliefs. However, these findings must be interpreted within the context of the other findings which indicate that most of the subjects in this study had positive attitudes toward both Blacks and Whites and valued their interactions with each group.

The results of this exploratory study are limited by the sample size (n = 111), by the nonrandom selection of the subjects, and by the fact that the subjects lived in one geographical region of the United States. However, it is one of the few existing studies that attempt to describe the social and psychological worlds of upper-middle-class Black families who live in predominantly White suburban communities. This study makes a contribution to the development of theories related to assimilation and pluralism, to the measurement of these variables, and raises important questions about the "marginal man" hypothesis and about the possibility for successful bicultural functioning within Black and White worlds. It is hoped that future research will devote more attention to the study of Black middle-class families who live in predominantly White suburbs and better clarify the relationship between the variables examined in this study.

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TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS IN THE INSTRUMENTS USED IN THE STUDY

PURALIST BELIEFS

Blacks who live in predominantly white neighborhoods should try hard to get to know their white neighbors.

Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly
____	____	____	____	____	____

PLURALIST BEHAVIOR 1

What is the race of the friends who visit your home?

____ All Black ____ Black and White ____ All White
____ Mostly Black ____ Mostly White ____ Other _____ (Please specify)

PLURALIST BEHAVIOR 2

What is the race of your children's close friends?

____ All Black ____ Black and White ____ All White
____ Mostly Black ____ Mostly White ____ Other _____ (Please specify)

PLURALIST BEHAVIOR 3

Of the books in your home, about how many of them deal primarily with Black Americans? (The respondent checked the appropriate number).

BLACK AND WHITE INDIVIDUALS IN LIFE

Directions: Below is a list of people that most individuals have in their lives. Please indicate the race or races of each of the person or persons in the list by putting a check ( ) in the appropriate space in the columns on the right side of the page. (Further directions and an example were given to respondents).

	Black	White	Other (Please specify)
1. Your beautician (or barber)	____	____	_____

UNEASINESS WITH WHITES

When I am around a white person, I am afraid he or she might say something that will show that he or she is prejudiced.

____ I feel this way often ____ I feel this way sometimes ____ I never feel this way

ANXIETY

Read each statement and indicate the extent to which you share or do not share the concern stated by circling the appropriate number.

My children do not have enough Black playmates and friends.
I am not at all concerned 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I am very concerned

BLACK SUPERIORITY

I think that Blacks have a kind of quiet courage which few white people have. ____ Agree ____ Disagree

GRADUALISM

I favor gradual rather than sudden changes in the social relations between Blacks and Whites. ____ Agree ____ Disagree

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

About how often do you go to school to attend a school play, sports activity, program, etc.?

____ Every week ____ About once a month ____ About once or twice a year
____ About three times a month ____ About every six weeks ____ Less than once a year
____ About twice a month ____ About every three months ____ Never

SCHOOL ATTITUDES

The school(s) in my neighborhood has an excellent program in the basic academic areas, such as reading, mathematics, and writing.

Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly
____	____	____	____	____	____

NEIGHBORHOOD ATTITUDES

My neighborhood is a good place in which to raise children.

Agree very strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Disagree very strongly
____	____	____	____	____	____

STRUCTURAL ASSIMILATION

Are there any white people you regard as friends? ____ Yes ____ No

RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION

How often do you attend Sunday worship service?

____ Every week ____ About once a month ____ About once or twice a year
____ About twice a month ____ About every six weeks ____ Less than once a year
____ About three times a month ____ About every three months ____ Never

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities of Variables

	$\bar{X}$	SD	Number of Items	Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)
Pluralist Beliefs	51.8	9.1	14	.74
Pluralist Behavior 1	23.0	7.6	7	.69
Pluralist Behavior 2	30.2	7.1	9	.62
Pluralist Behavior 3	15.0	4.6	4	.43
Pluralist Behavior Total	68.5	12.9	20	.67
Black and White Individuals in Life	36.9	6.5	24	.67
Uneasiness with Whites	13.9	2.4	8	.63
Anxiety	59.6	23.7	16	.92
Black Superiority	16.5	2.7	10	.77
Gradualism	17.2	2.8	10	.83
School Participation	27.8	7.0	8	.72
School Attitudes	37.8	7.6	9	.72
Neighborhood Attitudes	45.2	7.2	9	.84
Structural Assimilation	9.1	4.4	6	.34
Religious Participation	18.7	11.5	6	.71

TABLE 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Pluralist Beliefs	1.0	.23**	.25	.06	.32**	.30**	.45**	.35**	.17*	.11	-.08	-.53**	-.63**	-.13†	-.03
2. Pluralist Behavior 1		1.0	.08	.10	.69***	.18*	.22**	.21**	.16†	-.03	-.01	-.20*	-.13†	.04	-.02
3. Pluralist Behavior 2			1.0	.23**	.71***	.50**	.27**	.02	.17†	-.04	-.04	-.24**	-.20*	-.15†	.21*
4. Pluralist Behavior 3				1.0	.56***	.25	.02	-.06	.12	-.02	.11	-.15†	-.15†	-.04	.04
5. Pluralist Behavior Tot					1.0 **	.47**	.32**	.09	.25**	-.03	.02	-.32**	-.25**	-.07	.15†
6. Black-White Individual in life						1.0	.35**	.19**	.30**	-.03	-.02	-.36**	-.34**	-.08	-.07
7. Uneasiness with Whites							1.0	.28**	.28**	-.14	-.01	-.42**	-.48**	-.21*	.03
8. Anxiety								1.0	.29**	.08	-.01	-.53**	-.37**	-.04	.08
9. Black Superiority									1.0	.05	.09	-.16†	-.11	-.15†	-.10
10. Gradualism										1.0	.01	-.20*	.01	-.09	.03
11. School Participation											1.0	.02	.11	.25**	.04
12. School Attitudes												1.0	.63**	.15†	.03
13. Neighborhood Attitudes													1.0	.14†	.04
14. Structural Assimilation														1.0	.05
15. Religious Participation															1.0

* p = < .05
** p - < .01
*** P <.01 because Pluralist Behavior 1, 2, and 3 comprise Pluralist behavior total
† p is approaching significant at .05 level
n = 111

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